

Thomas Jefferson to Leroy-Bayard and McCorn, April 7, 1816 , from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO LEROY AND BAYARD J. MSS.

Monticello, Apr. 7, 16.

Gentlemen, —I received by our last mail only, your favor of Mar. 19, reminding me of a very ancient and very just debt to Messrs. Van Staphorsts, and which I ought certainly long ago to have replaced to them, unasked. But, engaged constantly in offices of more expence than compensation, our means are ever absorbed as soon as received by the needy who press, while the indulgent lie over for a moment of greater convenience. Yet ancient and just as is this debt, it presents itself at a moment when I am not prepared to meet it. I am a landholder, and depend on the income of my farms. Three years of war & close blockade of the Chesapeak compleatly sunk the produce of those three years, and the year of peace which has followed has barely met arrearages and taxes. Commerce and free markets being now restored to us, we may count on the future with more certainty. I shall be able to pay off one of my bonds [*torn*] at the date of a year from this time, and one other each year after until the three are discharged. I hope that this arrangement will be acceptable to Messrs. Van Staphorsts, and that their indulgence will not be withdrawn suddenly and all at once. With the forbearance I ask, I shall replace their money from annual income which I can spare, and be saved the regret of injuriously mutilating my landed property. It will give me great pleasure to learn that the measure of kindness hitherto shewn, will be filled up by so much further forbearance, as will make it in

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the end, as it was in the beginning, a salutary accommodation. Accept the assurances of my great esteem & respect.¹

¹ On August 15, 1816, Jefferson wrote to Leroy and Bayard.

“ Monticello, Aug. 15, 16.

“ Gentlemen,—Your favor of the 7th is received, and I shall endeavor to comply as exactly as in my power with the instalments with which Messrs. Van Staphorsts are so kind as to indulge me. My resources are those of a farmer, depending on the produce of my farms, which is usually sold in April or May, but sometimes necessarily on some credit to avoid sacrificing it, which I am sure the kind motives of the loan would spare were these causes at any time to oblige me to overrun the exact day. Accept my thanks for your friendly intermediation in this business and the assurance of my great esteem and respect.”